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CIA Aide Reports Gems Missing Following Visits by Colleagues

By Morton Mintz
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An undercover investigation by the Central Intelligence Agency of one of its own high-level officials has brought the

agency another burst of bizarre publicity and serious charges about its methods of operation. The story involves \$20,000 to \$30,000 in jewels discovered missing after a CIA visitation,

an 86-year-old woman in a state of shock and a house in a Georgetown neighborhood abounding with CIA brass.

The official, Hans V. Tofte, said last night that one CIA man, Kenneth R. Slocum, had "snooped" inside his home in an area that was "absolutely off limits" and had then reported what he found like "a good little boy."

Tofte said this was followed by a "stupid cloak and dagger raid" in which his mother-in-law had been bam-boozled.

He said that all of this left him "outraged as a private citizen" and dismayed as a man with pride in the agency at its unprofessional performance.

In a separate interview, his wife Marlys shared her husband's outrage at what she called the "impertinence and ruthlessness" of the young CIA people "plowing through this house."

The account of the episode given by Tofte and his wife was backed by J. C. Chatel, a realtor who shared their anger and is now the owner of the house in question, a 3-story brick residence at 1667 35th st. nw.

But a spokesman for the CIA, Cmdr. John Moran, issued a statement defending the agency's role and saying that Slocum had seen "exposed classified documents in a private home . . . a violation of agency security regulations."

The complex story began in June when Tofte, 59, a World War II underground and commando hero, sold his house to Chatel's real estate firm, which then advertised it for rental or sale.

On July 23, Slocum, of 2811

P st. nw., came with his wife to see about renting a basement apartment.

According to the CIA, Slocum was "not aware of Mr. Tofte's Agency affiliation" and was shown through the property by Tofte's mother-in-law, Charlotte Leister. The Toftes, however, said the couple was

shown through by Melita Molloy, a saleswoman for the Chatel firm.

The CIA statement said that "Slocum noticed by chance classified agency material in one of the rooms being shown and reported this promptly to Agency security officials."

But the Toftes said that although Slocum had come to see a basement apartment he got into a third-floor area used by Tofte as a library and which was closed to everyone.

There, Tofte said, he had manuscript material for a textbook and CIA material taken home "by me for the purpose of homework." In a statement given to police last Saturday Tofte said taking papers home "is customary for executives and senior personnel, as well as employees of certain ranks and responsibilities."

The Agency's contention that Slocum discovered the CIA material by chance was countered by Mrs. Tofte, who said it was securely wrapped in a parcel preparatory to moving, and that the parcel was under a blanket that, in turn, was under a tarpaulin.

On Sunday, July 24, the CIA statement said, the Slocum couple returned to the 35th Street home with "Charles D. Speake, 4570 MacArthur blvd. nw., a security representative of this agency . . .

"They were again admitted by Mr. Tofte's mother-in-law and took custody of the classified material," the statement continued.

"Subsequently, Mr. Tofte advised a security official of this Agency that some jewelry

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By Bob Burchette, Staff Photographer

STORM CENTER—This is the Georgetown home of CIA official Hans V. Tofte, from which \$20,000 to \$30,000 in jewels are missing following what Tofte calls "snooping" by agents from his own agency.

belonging to his wife was missing.

port this immediately to the Metropolitan Police Department . . . which we understand is now investigating the reported loss. This Agency is cooperating fully with the authorities of the Seventh Precinct in this investigation."

The rebuttal made by the Toftes and Chatel includes these points:

- The Slocums and Speake found that the aged Mrs. Leister was alone and used "a little ruse"—pretending to be interested in the place and getting her permission to inspect it.

- Coming without a representative of the Chatel firm on the second visit and getting past the two Tofte poodles outside, the threesome got into the house.

- While one of them kept Mrs. Leister distracted with talk about the kitchen, fireplace, floors and flues, the third floor was entered—supposedly by the two men—and the papers were seized.

That night, Tofte said in his July 30 statement to police, he "was escorted to CIA headquarters at Langley and informed to some extent of the . . . action."

He said he was "taken under the supervision of Mr. 'Hank M. Shor.' I requested to see my supervisor, Mr. Tracy Barnes, and later on the Agency's legal counsel, Mr. Lawrence Houston, in view of the bizarre circumstances surrounding the proceedings.

"I saw Mr. Barnes on Thursday, 28 July . . . I finally had a consultation with Mr. Houston on Friday . . . The latter informed me that my status as a CIA employe had now been revealed to the police.

"He did not seem to know that Mrs. Tofte of necessity and as a matter of routine, had reported the loss of her jewelry to both the police and one or more detectives of her insurance company.

"I have not made this statement before because I found it my duty to consult with CIA legal counsel prior to revealing names of people who have the details . . ."

The statement was a major element in a story about the episode broken Tuesday by Clark R. Mollenhoff in the Des Moines Register-Tribune.

The Toftes said that it was on July 25—the day after the "raid"—that they found missing not only the CIA material,

but also the jewelry, which had been in a pouch in a chest on the first floor.

Mrs. Tofte said her insurance company valued the jewels at \$10,600 less than the \$30,000 at which it was appraised a decade ago. She put the present value at much more than \$30,000.

Also missing, she said, were some items, precious to her, especially some pieces of ivory

that had been on a mantelpiece on the first floor, and a silk purse.

Reached last night, the CIA said the Agency "didn't have anything to do with the disappearance" of the jewelry.

Mrs. Tofte ridiculed the CIA's claim that it had encouraged her husband to make a report to the police on the jewel theft.

She said she had made the report, on July 25, to Det. Reverdy C. Orm of the Seventh Precinct. His boss, Det. Lt. John Kline, said the disappearance of the jewels will be recorded as a grand larceny.

He attributed the lack of a report in police files—none had gone out over the police teletype as of last night—to confusion caused by the fact that the Tofte couple has been in the process of moving from 35th Street to Massachusetts Avenue.

Mrs. Tofte said her mother has been in a state of shock and seriously ill since the episode.

The Danish-born Tofte has been in the CIA about 16 years and is paid just under \$25,000 a year.

According to the story by Mollenhoff, of the Washington Bureau of Cowles Publications, Tofte was honored by the Danish, British and Yugoslavian governments for his feats in World War II. His exploits in the Office of Strategic

Services, also in World War II, won him this Nation's Legion of Merit. In the Korean conflict he led CIA operations in Korea and Japan, according to Mollenhoff.

Mollenhoff said that Tofte had opposed the appointment of a professional CIA man to head the agency. The new CIA Director, Richard M. Helms, is a professional agency man, but Tofte said last night, "We're very good friends."

The Tofte episode comes only a few days after the CIA and particularly its new Director had come in for some other embarrassing publicity.

The other incident involved a letter to the editor, published by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, in which Helms praised an editorial in the newspaper that was critical of Chairman J. W. Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Last Friday Helms apologized publicly.

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